

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Claims 1-7 (cancelled)

Claim 8 (currently amended): A wiring structure for an integrated circuit, comprising:  
a first dielectric layer;

a plurality of conductors disposed on said first dielectric layer, said conductor separated laterally from each other by portions of a second dielectric layer and by air gaps, each of the conductors having air gaps adjacent thereto separating the conductor from the second dielectric layer; and

a third dielectric layer overlying the conductors,

wherein

said first dielectric layer and said third dielectric layer each have a dielectric constant less than that of the second dielectric layer, and

each of said conductors has a cross-section wider at a top thereof than at a bottom thereof, in accordance with each of the air gaps having a cross-section wider at a bottom thereof than at a top thereof.

Claim 9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (original): A wiring structure according to claim 8, further comprising a conducting stud in said first dielectric layer and in contact with one of said conductors.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A wiring structure according to claim 8 [[9]], wherein said second dielectric layer is of silicon dioxide.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A wiring structure according to claim 8 [[9]], wherein a cross-section of each of said conductors has a bottom in contact with said first dielectric layer, a top in contact with said third dielectric layer, and sides in contact only with the air gaps.